

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-17, 19-25 and 27-36 are currently pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 9, 11-13, 16, 21-24 and 29 have been amended. These amendments are supported by the specification on page 33, lines 7 to page 35, line 12. Entry of this amendment before examination on the merits is respectfully requested. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

A general explanation of the terms “means for expanding” and “expanding step” are discussed below to assist the Examiner in understanding the claimed inventions. As noted in the various examples in the application, the terms “expand” and “expansion” refer to a breakdown into lower domain components of a higher domain component. This is exemplified in the following two examples contained in the specification.

(a) The specification on page 27, lines 18 through 20 reads “A domain that has received an order performs constructional expansion into sub-parts and subassembly parts, etc., based upon the order.” The term “expansion” is used to show a breakdown into sub-parts and subassembly parts, to fill an order, i.e., a higher level domain.

(b) The specification on page 38, lines 18-21 reads “For example, with the reference to Fig. 2, an order that has entered domain 200-1 is expanded to a domain 201-1, thence to domains 211-2, 221-1 and arrives at domain 231-4 as an order for motor.” Again, the term “expanded” is used to describe a breakdown of a product into its parts. In this example, the lowest component part, of this example, is the motor.

Accordingly, the terms “expand” and “expansion” are used because as one order goes down a tree structure, each level involves a greater or equal number of elements and, thus,

the number of elements is expanded from the one order.

Turning to the currently cited references, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references, individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the claimed inventions.

For example, Dworkin (U.S. Patent No. 4,992,940) simply shows a system which enables a user to search a product database for a product or product type and vendor/supplier through a categorical menu or search terms.

In the system disclosed by Dworkin, the higher rank domain (for example, “SYSTEM” in Fig. 4) expresses only category of a lower rank of domain (for example, “MICROCOMPUTERS” and “PORTABLE COMPUTERS” in Fig. 4), and there is no physical relevance, data processing for order receiving and order sending, of a higher rank domain and a lower rank domain.

On the other hand, as claimed, the relationship between the higher rank domain and the lower rank domain expresses the relationship between the so-called unit and its composition part, concretely. Data processing for order receiving and order sending is performed between the higher rank domain and lower rank domain.

Therefore, Dworkin does not disclose or suggest the concept of domain; expanding, into each component part, a part corresponding to an order from an upper domain; or communicating to another domain an order for each of the expanded component part.

Inui (U.S. Patent No. 5,202,821) shows an order issue management system which

is different from the claimed arrangement. The order issue management system of Inui scans a parts file to exact required data relating to parts to be ordered based on information fed to the system from a production schedule system, a parts information system and a car information system. The order issue management system issues orders accordingly to a received order managing system. Inui does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

In Inui, Fig. 1, the Examiner asserts that the factory 10 is a first domain and the factory 20 is a second domain. In Inui, the order issue information and order-received information were processed independently at each of the factories (10, 20), respectively. The factory performs the processing function of the order issue information or the order-received information. However, the function of the domain is not limited to order issue information processing or order-received information processing.

Therefore, the factories are not equivalent to the domain of this invention. Inui does not disclose or suggest a concept of domains; expanding, into each component part, a part corresponding to an order from an upper domain; or communicating to another domain an order for each of the expanded component part.

As to the taking of Official Notices by the Examiner, Applicants continue to traverse each and every taking of Official Notice in the prior Office Actions and request the Examiner to provide support in the prior art for the alleged “well-known” facts.

In view of the foregoing, all pending claims are believed to be patentably distinguishable over the cited references, individually or in combination. In the event that a

telephone conference would facilitate examination in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the number provided.

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account 13-4503, Order No. 1232-4457. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

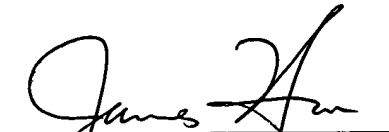
In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4503, Order No. 1232-4457. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 25, 2001

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